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The Four Phases of Emergency Management

In this unit, you will learn

- The four phases of emergency management,
- General activities that should happen in each phase of a disaster,
- Government responsibilities for emergency management, and
- Different types of emergency management activities performed by government officials.

WHAT ARE THE FOUR PHASES?

Typical emergencies that can occur in your home can illustrate the four phases.

- First, you prepare to protect yourself or others if an emergency occurs.
- If an accident does happen, you administer first aid or get medical attention if necessary.
- Later, you clean up or repair any damage.
- Finally, you ask yourself how the accident happened and how it can be prevented from happening again. You take steps you believe would lessen the problems you experienced handling the accident.

Let's illustrate these four phases with a common example.

Your young son falls down the stairs and is injured. You check his injuries and find that they are serious. You make the child comfortable and safe, but you know you should not move him. You remove any broken toys from the stairs to prevent other accidents. You immediately call the emergency number posted by your telephone. Your child receives medical attention and treatment for his injuries. You clean up the mess on the stairs. You later find out that the accident happened because your other child left toys on the stairs. Now you make sure that everyone in your family is told not to leave objects on the stairs. You also are careful to check the stairway more often, especially after your children have been playing.

When you respond to emergency situations or dangers in this manner, you are practicing emergency management.

- You had *prepared* yourself to handle emergencies (by learning basic first aid and posting the emergency number) and you knew what to do (check the extent of the child's injuries and get medical aid).
- When the emergency occurred, you



(Left) When an emergency occurs, appropriate actions must be taken to protect people and property from harm. In the case of this household injury, such action would include summoning help. (Right) By teaching his child not to leave toys on the stairs, this parent is seeking to avoid future emergencies.

reacted responsibly (observing the seriousness of the injury, making your child comfortable and safe, and removing broken toys from stairs and calling emergency medical service).

- Once the immediate emergency was over, you *repaired any damage* (cleaning up the mess and broken toys).
- Then you looked for ways to *avoid future emergencies of this type* (teaching family members to pick up things from stairs, and checking stairs often).

Emergency management includes each of these four activities. Emergency management is preparing to handle an emergency appropriately, acting in a responsible and helpful way, repairing the damage, and taking steps to prevent or lessen the harmful effects of future emergencies.

<h1>The Four Phases of Emergency Management</h1>	PREPAREDNESS	Preparing to handle an emergency
	RESPONSE	Responding safely to an emergency
	RECOVERY	Recovering from an emergency
	MITIGATION	Preventing future emergencies or minimizing their effects



Preparedness is knowing the warning signs and what to do during an emergency. A fire drill is an example of preparedness.



Response is taking the actions necessary to protect yourself from harm during an emergency. Leaving a building through a designated exit during a fire is an example of response.

Let us examine each of the four phases in more detail.

One way to protect yourself is to *be prepared* for emergencies before they happen. You can prepare yourself by learning what to do for the specific type of emergency that may occur. Another way to protect yourself is by learning the danger signals, so that you will be able to identify trouble when it happens. Having plans for what to do, where to go, or who to call for help before an event occurs will improve your chances of acting responsibly during an emergency. For instance, posting your community's emergency telephone numbers, holding fire or tornado drills, and installing smoke detectors are all preparedness measures.

Your safety and well-being in an emergency depend not only on how prepared you are by knowing what to do, but also on how you *respond* or *act* in a crisis. Emergencies can create fear and panic in people if they do not know how to respond. If you are prepared with a planned set of steps to take, you will know what to do and where to go for safety and help, even if you are frightened. By being able to act responsibly, you will be able to protect yourself, your family, and others around you. Taking cover in an earthquake and escaping a burning building are both examples of safe response.

After an emergency has happened and the immediate danger is over, your continued safety and well-being will depend on your ability to *recover*. After an illness you have a recovery period when your body repairs itself and returns to normal. During this recovery period, you must take care of yourself to prevent further illness. There is also a recovery period following an emergency when your family or home must be brought back to normal. If your home has been damaged, you will want to make repairs and return to normal as quickly as possible.

Although some emergencies can be prevented, some cannot. *Mitigation* includes preventing those emergencies that can be prevented, and reducing the damage and danger to life caused by those emergencies that cannot be prevented. For example, to mitigate fire in your home, you would follow safety standards in selecting building materials, wiring, and appliances. But no matter how much care you take, you know that an accident involving fire could happen. To protect yourself from the costly burden of rebuilding after a fire, you should obtain fire insurance. These actions are examples of mitigation because they reduce the danger and damaging effects from fire.

Ideally, mitigation should take place before an emergency happens in order to prevent or lessen the damage. Frequently, however, steps to prevent or mitigate the affects of emergencies are not taken until an emergency has already occurred, when repairs are being considered. Thus mitigation is related to both recovery and preparedness.

Before you continue, let's review the four phases of emergency management. These terms will be used throughout the rest of the course.

Preparedness

includes *plans or preparations* made to save lives and to help response-and-rescue operations. Evacuation plans and stocking food and water are both examples of preparedness. Preparedness activities take place **BEFORE** an emergency occurs.

Response

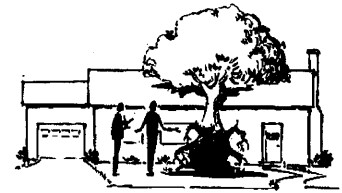
includes *actions taken* to save lives and prevent further property damage in a disaster or emergency situation. Response is putting your preparedness plans into action. Seeking shelter from a tornado or turning off gas valves in an earthquake are both response activities. Response activities take place **DURING** an emergency.

Recovery

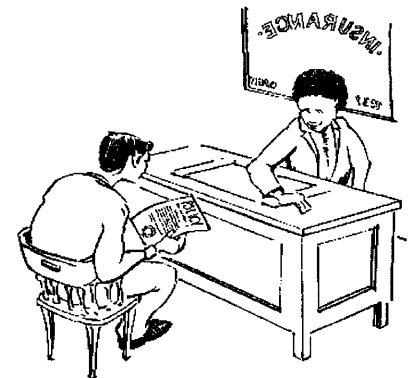
includes actions taken to *return to a normal or even safer situation* following an emergency. Recovery includes getting financial assistance to help pay for the repairs. Recovery activities take place **AFTER** an emergency.

Mitigation

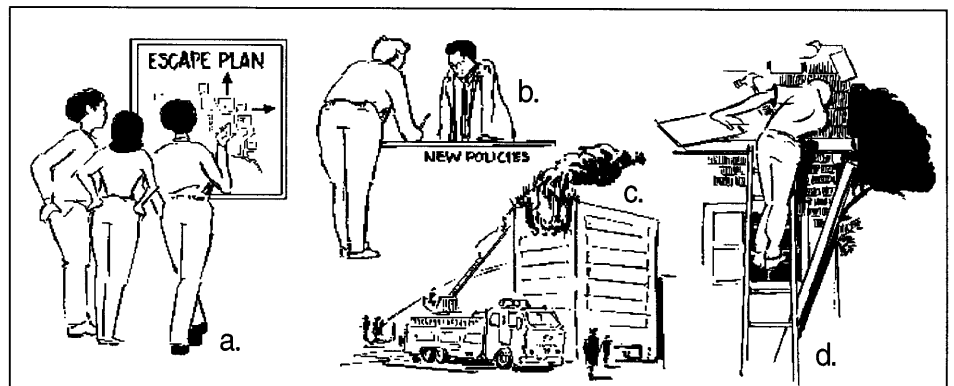
includes any activities that *prevent* an emergency, *reduce the chance* of an emergency happening, or *reduce the damaging effects* of unavoidable emergencies. Buying flood and fire insurance for your home is a mitigation activity. Mitigation activities take place **BEFORE** and **AFTER** emergencies.



Recovery is what you do after an emergency to return to your normal life and to make yourself safer. Undertaking home repairs is an example of recovery.



Mitigation is preventing emergencies or taking actions to lessen the harmful effects of unavoidable emergencies. Purchasing insurance is an example of mitigation.



Which of the four phases of emergency management is illustrated by each of the above drawings?
Answers: (a) preparedness, (b) mitigation, (c) response, (d) recovery

CHALLENGE EXERCISE: The Phases of Emergency Management

To help you review the four phases of emergency management, complete each statement by filling in the blank with the correct answer from the four choices given below. (Answers on page A-1)

MITIGATION

PREPAREDNESS

RESPONSE

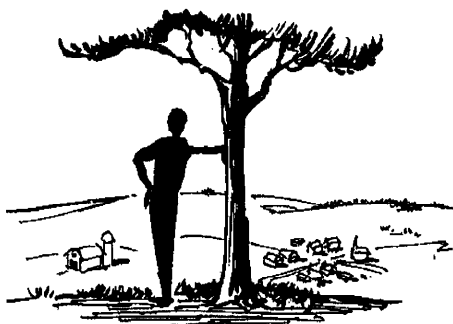
RECOVERY

1. Planning what to do in an emergency is called _____.
2. Action taken to protect yourself and others during an emergency is called _____.
3. Repairing damages caused during an emergency and returning to normal life is called _____.
4. Preventing emergencies is called _____.
5. Taking steps beforehand to reduce the amount of danger and damage from potential emergencies is called _____.
6. The phases of emergency management that should take place *before* a disaster are called _____ and _____.
7. The phases of emergency management that should take place *during* or *immediately after* an emergency are called _____ and _____.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNMENT

The four phases of emergency management can be applied to all emergencies, whether they are minor accidents or major events. In your home, you have yourself, your family, and your personal property to protect. In your community, your local government must see that the lives and property within the community are

protected when an emergency strikes. In addition, the industry, agriculture, commerce, and other elements of your community's economy must be preserved. In other words, everything that makes your community function must be protected from harm. Government activities are designed to provide such protection.



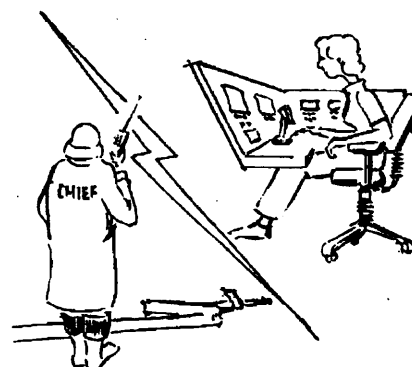
While you alone cannot prevent or lessen the impact of major disasters that may occur in your community, you can take appropriate actions at the household level to protect family and property.

Emergency Management

You can identify and remove potential hazards or mitigate against other hazards in your home by establishing safety measures. But, acting alone, you cannot prevent or lessen the impact of major emergencies that may happen in your community.

Major emergencies can cover several jurisdictions and may require large-scale government and voluntary agency response. Coordinated plans must be made to prevent or mitigate the effects of emergencies, and to save lives and property in an emergency. When an emergency threatens, hundreds of people

need to be warned and protected. Emergency services must be ready to care for the injured and to give shelter to those who cannot remain in their homes. Communications systems must be in place, and someone must direct the response activities. There must be ways to assess the damage caused by the emergency, to return people safely to their homes after the danger has passed, and to help people and businesses return to normal as soon as possible. Efforts must be made to increase safety in the face of future emergencies. This nationwide protection process, which encompasses all four phases of activities—mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery—is called *emergency management*.



Local jurisdictions must have effective communication systems in place for both minor and major emergencies.

Achieving a comprehensive network of emergency management involves systematic planning on the part of local, State, and Federal governments and voluntary agencies to identify the potential hazards that could threaten each community, and apply the four phases of emergency management to develop sound emergency plans for each potential hazard. Each community should be prepared to use local resources appropriately to prepare for and deal with each emergency. When local resources are not adequate, communities should be prepared to coordinate with other local and State governments to share resources needed to protect citizens, property, and government in the event of any large-scale emergency.

Achieving Emergency Management

This course is about emergency management and how to achieve it. As you complete each unit you will be applying emergency management strategies to analyze your hazard risks, identify the unique aspects of each potential hazard, and develop a family disaster plan to help you respond to the hazards that threaten your community. Your plans will include mitigation activities, ways to receive warning, means of communication with both your family and local officials in time of emergency, response actions based on the unique characteristics of the hazards, and typical recovery activities. Your plans will be flexible enough to help you respond safely to the unique characteristics of particular hazards and emergencies. When you finish the course, you will also know what you need to do to improve your preparedness and where to go for help.



Training programs for emergency management personnel are extremely important in ensuring preparedness.

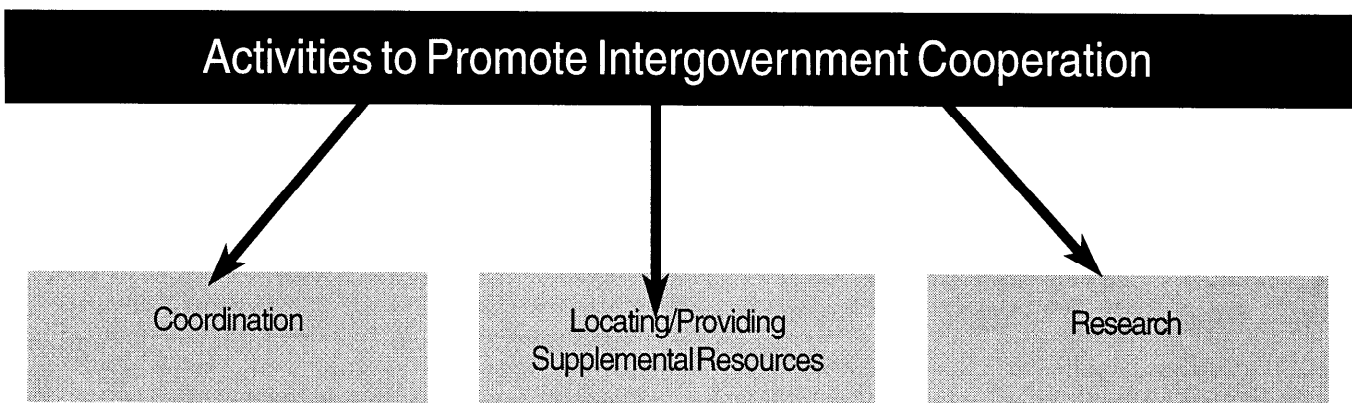
On a larger scale, these same principles are applied to attain the goal of national emergency management. The difference is that local, State, and Federal officials are working together to provide protection for millions of citizens. They also are working within local and State governments, which differ in their needs, resources, laws, and policies regarding emergency management. Each person who takes this course will have plans that are similar, but each plan will be unique to the person and to the community and State in which that person lives. In the same way, each community and each State has both common emergency management requirements and unique needs based on potential hazards and the resources available to protect people, property, and government.

You need to know how emergency management works at government levels so that you can coordinate your personal preparedness plans with local plans. This coordination is a basic emergency management principle, and as you proceed with the course you will understand why it is so important.

Government Activities

In order to better understand the importance of your role in emergency management and how you as an individual are part of the national emergency management system, you should know the steps each level of government takes to ensure your safety and protection. Emergency management at all government levels involves many activities. Some of these activities are designed to promote efficient cooperation among the various government levels. Activities in this category include coordination, locating and providing supplemental resources, and research.

- *Coordination of plans and preparedness activities* are necessary to avoid conflict and inefficient use of people and resources. State plans must be coordinated so that various activities do not interfere with one another. Community and county plans cannot be in conflict with State plans. The coordination of all emergency services and resources is essential in working toward the common goal of effective emergency management. Each State has a State emergency management office constituted by Federal and State laws with responsibility to assist in this coordination effort.
- *Supplemental resources* such as money, equipment, or personnel help to close the gap between the capability needed by a community and its actual capability to protect citizens in an emergency. Supplemental resources can benefit States, communities, and individuals, and they can be provided in several ways. One example of supplemental resources is Federal disaster assistance grants and loans. Another example is mutual aid agreements made between fire departments in neighboring communities to help each other in a fire emergency too large for one department to handle alone.
- *Research* provides up-to-date information on mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery activities. This research is usually funded at the Federal level. States, local communities, and individuals all benefit as new information is made public. One example is research that produces new designs and proper construction for dams, which leads to fewer dam failures.

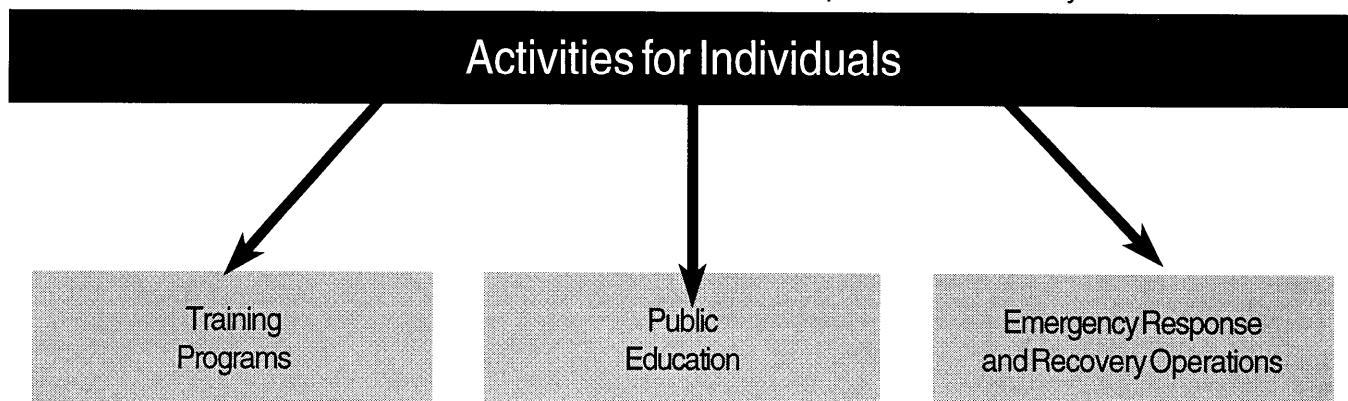


Government Activities and You

The three activities just described involve cooperation among levels of government. The following emergency management activities relate more directly to individuals and to their participation in government-sponsored emergency management activities.

- *Public education* includes publication of printed materials and news articles, broadcasts, public service announcements, meetings, and courses such as this one. These activities are organized at all government levels. Education can help prepare the public to protect itself from hazards by encouraging active participation in emergency management.

- *Training programs* are developed to provide emergency personnel and volunteers with information and skills needed to protect the public. Many training programs involve exercises to give emergency management personnel a chance to practice their skills. These programs help keep the emergency management work force, from full-time paid personnel to part-time volunteers, aware of the latest research and procedures.
- *Disaster response and recovery operations* include warnings, evacuation, sheltering, search and rescue, and cleanup activities. A prepared public and trained emergency management personnel should work together during disaster operations for safe and effective response and recovery.



These activities take place at all government levels. Let's look more closely at the specific emergency management responsibilities of the local, State, and Federal governments.

Government Responsibilities

Local governments make plans and provide resources to protect their citizens from the hazards that threaten their communities. Local government serves as the link between you and the State and Federal agencies in the emergency management network. Local government has the responsibility to protect citizens from any emergency that strikes the community. This is done through mitigation activities, preparedness plans, response to emergencies, and recovery operations. Although communities differ widely, the responsibility for protecting the citizens and property of any community remains with local government. Wherever you live within the United States, a county or municipal agency has been designated as your local emergency management agency.

In emergency management, this saying applies: "Responsibility begins at home." You are responsible for protecting yourself, your family, and your property to the best of your ability. This means using your own resources to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from personal emergencies.

However, since individuals cannot be expected to have sufficient resources to adequately protect themselves from major emergencies, the community assumes responsibility for protecting its citizens. Your local government helps to protect you through the following activities:

- Identifying hazards and assessing their potential risk to the community;
- Determining the community's capability to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from major emergencies;
- Identifying and employing methods to improve the community's capability through efficient use of resources, improved coordination, and cooperation with other communities and with the State and Federal governments;
- Establishing mitigation measures such as building codes, zoning ordinances, or land-use management programs;
- Developing and coordinating preparedness plans;

1 Emergency Preparedness U.S.A.

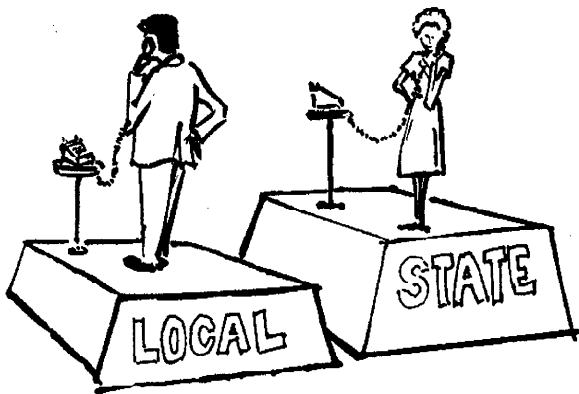
- Establishing warning systems;
- Stocking emergency supplies and equipment;
- Educating the public and training emergency personnel;
- Activating response plans and rescue operations;
- Ensuring that shelter and medical assistance is provided;
- Assessing damage caused by the emergency; and
- Recovering from the emergency and helping citizens return to normal life as soon as possible.

If a community or group of communities does not have sufficient resources to provide adequate protection for its citizens, the local government can ask for assistance from the State or Federal government. Many Federal programs have been set up to give additional help, especially to communities with major and continuing problems such as floods and earthquakes. In addition, communities and States are encouraged to develop cooperative agreements to share resources and to make more efficient use of the resources they do have.

At the *State level* of government, a State emergency management office is involved in protecting communities and citizens within the State. The State office carries out statewide emergency management activities and helps coordinate emergency management activities involving more than one community. In addition, the State may assist individual communities when they need help. If any community lacks the resources needed to protect itself or to recover from a disaster, the State may help with money, personnel, or other resources.

Such financial assistance is made available on a supplemental basis through a process of application and review. If community resources are insufficient, the local government may apply to the State for State assistance. The governor reviews the application, studies the damage estimates and, if appropriate, declares the area a State disaster. This official declaration makes State resources available. However, if damages are so extensive that the combined local and State resources are not sufficient, the governor applies to the President for Federal disaster assistance. A similar assessment of the application and damage estimates is made. If the need for Federal assistance funds is justified, the President issues a major disaster declaration and resources are made available. This system ensures that State and Federal assistance is used wisely and fairly, and that individual disaster victims' needs are met.

Different State emergency management offices often have varying names and procedures for operating. Office titles commonly used include Emergency Management, Civil Defense, Civil Preparedness, and Disaster Services. In this text, the term emergency management is used to refer to these State offices. By whatever name, each State office is involved with mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery activities within the State. The State is the pivotal point between policy guidance and resources available at the *Federal level* and the implementation of comprehensive emergency management programs at the *local level*.



When a local jurisdiction lacks the resources to protect itself or to recover from a disaster, the State may help with money, personnel, or other resources.

At the *Federal level* of government, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is involved in mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery activities. FEMA helps the States in several ways. It provides training programs and research information on the latest mitigation measures, and reviews and coordinates state emergency plans. It also provides financial assistance, coordinates services for disaster response and recovery activities, and makes flood insurance available to individuals and businesses in communities that join the National Flood Insurance Program. By subsidizing State and local offices of emergency management, FEMA assists States in maintaining emergency management programs. FEMA also provides guidance and coordination for plans to warn and protect the nation in national

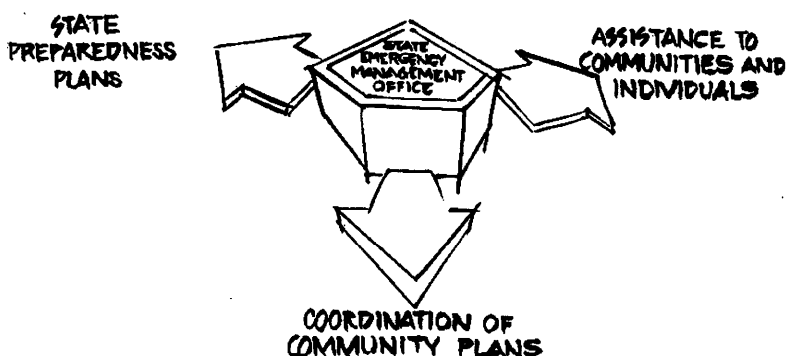
security emergencies.

Additionally, the Federal government, through FEMA, provides *supplemental* resources when communities and States do not have sufficient resources to protect or assist their communities and citizens following a disaster. This assistance is intended to help restore essential services that can get the local economy going again, and to meet disaster-related needs of individuals.

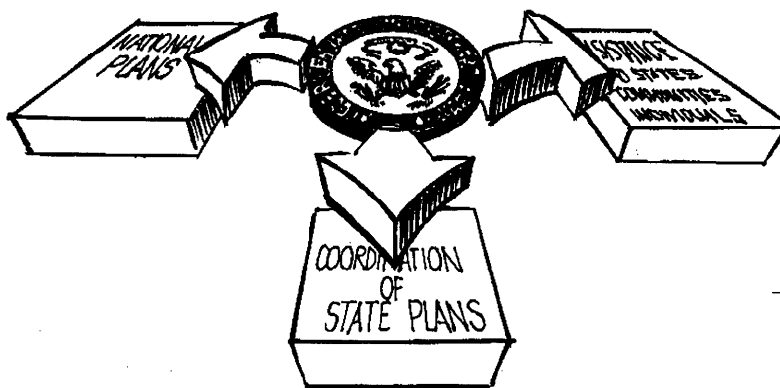
In summary, the goal of emergency management is to provide protection from all hazards for the citizens, properties, and governments within the United States. Effective emergency management includes a functional approach to all emergencies, cooperative planning, appropriate use of resources, and shared responsibilities among the three levels of government.

- The local government is responsible for emergency planning response and continued assessment of its ability to protect citizens and property within the community.
- The State government is responsible for assisting the communities within the State by reviewing plans and providing guidance. The State government also makes plans and assesses its capability to provide protection from large-scale, statewide disasters.
- A State will assist communities within the State that do not have adequate resources to protect themselves or to recover from disaster.
- The Federal government is responsible for assisting the States by reviewing plans, providing guidance, and making plans and assessing its capability to provide protection from large-scale disasters. It supplements State assistance when State and local resources are insufficient to help recovery.

Throughout this course you will learn about major emergencies and how governments at all levels are prepared to respond. You'll learn to follow the same basic steps to safety that your local and State governments follow. The goal of this course is to encourage and prepare you to follow emergency management activities in your own home, because that is where the whole system begins.



State emergency management offices prepare plans for the State, coordinate community plans, and provide disaster-related assistance to communities and individuals.



The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides many services to promote sound emergency management nationally—including coordinating disaster plans at the national level, coordinating with States on planning issues, and assisting States, communities, and individuals through specific disaster-related programs.

CHALLENGE EXERCISE: Responsibilities of Levels of Government

To find out if you understand how the responsibility for your protection is divided among the three levels of government, indicate the level of government—local, State, or Federal—that would be responsible for each of the following activities. (Answers on page A-2)

1. Evacuating an elementary school in your town that is threatened by a chemical spill.
2. Providing resources to help your State recover from a Presidentially declared disaster.
3. Coordinating the evacuation of towns and communities threatened by a hurricane.
4. Establishing zoning laws to regulate home building in a dangerous flood area.



CENTERVILLE: THE FOUR PHASES IN ACTION

To understand how emergency management is applied at the local level and how it relates to you as an individual, let's look at an imaginary community and some of its emergency management activities. We'll call the community Centerville. It is a medium-sized town of 20,000 people, located alongside a river.

One of the major hazards that threatens Centerville is flooding. Centerville joined the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by adopting a local ordinance to regulate building activities in the flood-prone areas. Since Centerville is participating in the NFIP, any resident or property owner is eligible to purchase Federal flood insurance. The Centerville Town Council appointed an emergency manager to prepare plans for handling the flooding problem. These plans included a warning system, evacuation plans, and emergency response teams to help move people to safety from the low-lying areas of the community. The emergency manager distributed flood preparedness information, presented public and school programs on flood hazards and preparedness, and encouraged citizens who lived within the community to buy flood insurance provided by the National Flood Insurance Program through property insurance companies and agents. The local government and the Red Cross pre-identified shelter sites and offered first aid and shelter management courses to the public. In cooperation with the National Weather Service and the State, Centerville installed a series of river gauges at certain points along the river to monitor water levels. This provided an advance warning system.

One spring, a major flood struck Centerville. Warnings were issued, and response teams quickly followed emergency plans and procedures. Citizens in threatened areas were evacuated to Red Cross emergency shelters; no lives were lost and only minor injuries occurred. However, damage to homes, businesses, and farmlands was heavy.

The amount of damage and economic loss was quickly estimated by local disaster assessment teams. Centerville's emergency manager reported the damage assessment to the mayor of Centerville. The mayor contacted the State's Office of Emergency Management and gave the damage report. The State, in turn, contacted the Federal Emergency Management Agency with the damage report, and requested a joint Federal, State, and local assessment. Based on the results of the joint assessment, the Governor requested a Presidential declaration of major disaster through FEMA. The President declared Centerville a major disaster area and authorized release of Federal disaster assistance funds.

FEMA, in coordination with the State and local governments and the Red Cross, established a Disaster Application Center in Centerville where its citizens and business owners applied for disaster relief funds. After applications were reviewed, disaster relief funds from the Federal government were distributed to disaster victims and local jurisdictions.

Those citizens of Centerville who had purchased a flood insurance policy contacted their insurance agents and had the damage assessed immediately. Flood insurance claims were paid quickly, and flood victims began to rebuild in ways that made their property less prone to damage in the next flood. In a few months, Centerville homes and businesses were safer than ever. *How were the citizens of Centerville protected?*

Before a Flood Emergency...

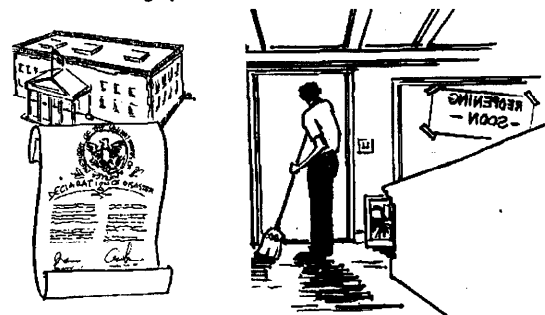
- The local government knew that flooding was a hazard.
- Plans were made to protect people and property in the event of flood.
- A floodplain management ordinance was adopted and enforced.
- A warning system was established.
- Citizens were informed of the risk of floods and were encouraged to buy flood insurance.



Centerville's leaders were aware of the town's vulnerability to floods. The town installed a series of river gauges to monitor water levels and provide an advance warning system.

During the Emergency...

- Warnings were issued.
- Everyone knew what to do.
- The plans made earlier were put into action.
- People were evacuated quickly.
- Shelters were prepared.
- Medical and health services were available.



After the Emergency...

- Damage to property was quickly assessed, and insurance claims were promptly paid.
- Governments (local, State, and Federal), disaster relief organizations such as the Red Cross, and individual citizens worked together to help Centerville recover.

(Left) The President declared Centerville a major disaster area and authorized release of Federal disaster funds. (Right) Centerville's preparedness— and a willingness to help at the State and Federal levels— helped it to recover from a major emergency.

Emergency management is the responsibility not only of the government, but also of individuals like you. By working together and participating actively in emergency management activities, protection from harm and costly damage is possible.

HOW WELL HAVE YOU LEARNED?

Unit One Review

(Answers on page A-2)

Answer each of the following questions by placing a check next to the *best* response.

1. Immediately following an explosion in your small town, fires are extinguished, the injured are cared for, and crowds are controlled. Which level of government is responsible for these activities?
☐ a. Federal
☐ b. Local
☐ c. State
☐ d. Regional
2. Which of the following should be accomplished *before* an emergency occurs?
☐ a. Put emergency response plans into action.
☐ b. Evacuate persons from the threatened area.
☐ c. Seek emergency help (medical, fire, rescue, or police).
☐ d. Learn about hazards that could threaten the community.
3. Your local chapter of the Red Cross and emergency management office hold scheduled public meetings to teach the citizens how to prepare themselves for hurricanes. This is an example of which emergency management activity?
☐ a. Coordination of plans and preparedness
☐ b. Public education
☐ c. Training of emergency personnel
☐ d. Applying mitigation methods
4. Once a year, emergency management personnel in your community practice responding to a major emergency. This is an example of which emergency management activity?
☐ a. Assessing potential risk
☐ b. Public education
☐ c. Training of emergency personnel
☐ d. Applying mitigation methods
5. What level of government is responsible for establishing mitigation measures such as zoning ordinances?
☐ a. State
☐ b. Federal
☐ c. Local
☐ d. Regional